

969,053

Soc 10 PAK

By W/HRM Date 14 MAY 98



Department of State

TELEGRAM

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ 772

PAGE 01 DACCA 02417 301501Z

45
ACTION AID-28

INFO OCT-01 NEA-13 SSO-00 NSCE-00 CCO-00 USIE-00 IO-13
PM-05 NSC-10 SS-20 RSC-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 HEW-08
INR-08 NSAE-00 P-03 PRS-01 SCA-01 USIA-12 SCS-04
RSR-01 /129 W

O 301210Z NOV 70
FM AMCONSUL DACCA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2359
INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD IMMEDIATE

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ DACCA 2417

SUBJECT: EAST PAKISTAN DISASTER RELIEF

REF: STATE 193149
FROM: AMBASSADOR

1. WILLIAMS ARRIVED AT 11:15 TODAY (NOVEMBER 30) AND I TOOK HIM, TOGETHER WITH WHEELER AND GRIFFEL, AT ONCE ABOARD THE ATTACHE PLANE FOR A COMPREHENSIVE FLIGHT OVER DEVASTATED AREA. THE ROUTE FOLLOWED WAS DACCA, BARISAL, PATUAKHALI, THENCE A SWEEP OF THE LOWER ISLAND CROSSING OVER TO BHOLA ISLAND, FOLLOWED UP THE EAST COAST AND ACROSS TO BHOLA CITS. FROM BHOLA WE TRANSITED PART OF HATIYA, THENCE TO NOAKHALI, CROSSING OVER OUR U.S. HELIO PORT AT MAUJDI COURT AND THEREAFTER RETURNING TO DACCA. WILLIAMS EXPRESSED CONSIDERABLE SATISFACTION OVER HAVING FIRST HAND COMPREHENSIVE VIEW OF AREA AND ITS PROBLEMS. FLIGHT COVERED MANY MILES OF COASTAL EMBANKMENTS AND EXTENT OF THEIR DESTRUCTION OF PARTICULAR IMPORTANCE TO HIM.

2. WHAT I OBSERVED TODAY FULLY SUBSTANTIATES ALL ASPECTS OUR LATEST REPORTING. AT BARISAL, IAUAKHALI AND BHOLA OBSERVED EXTENSIVE RELIEF DEPOTS AND RELIEF APPARATUS OPERATION. WHERE NO COUNTRY BOATS OR LARGE POWERED RIVER VESSELS OBSERVED ON SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 21, TODAY NOTICED SEVERAL HUNDRED RIVER BOATS IN OPERATION AND SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF LARGE MOTORIZED

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

DECLASSIFIED
PA/HO, Department of State
E.O. 12958, as amended
June 9, 2005

REPRODUCED AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

969053

By *WJH* /HRM Date 14 MAY 96



Department of State

TELEGRAM

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

PAGE 02 DACCA 02417 301501Z

RIVER VESSELS. RIVER BOATS HAVE PENETRATED DEEP INTO THE INLAND CANALS. CONSEQUENTLY, IT WOULD APPEAR THAT WATER TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM RAPIDLY BEING RESTORED. DURING FLIGHT, SAW FIVE FOOD DISTRIBUTION CENTERS FULLY ACTIVATED. AT ONE POINT BELOW PATUAKHALI BOATS FROM CHITTAGONG WERE SEEN UNLOADING BAMBOO FOR RECONSTRUCTION PURPOSES. EVERYWHERE OBSERVED FACT THAT PEOPLE WERE CONSTRUCTING TEMPORARY SHELTERS OR REBUILDING HOMES. FEW CADAVERS SEEN ALTHOUGH NOTED CONSIDERABLE NUMBER DEAD CATTLE STILL UNBURIED. IT WAS OBVIOUS THAT LIFE IN THIS RURAL AREA WAS OVERCOMING THE RAVAGES OF THE CYCLONE AND TIDAL WAVE AND REBUILDING HAD BEGUN. THE STRIKING DIFFERENCES OF WHAT I OBSERVED BETWEEN MY FIRST FLIGHT OVER THE AREA LAST SATURDAY, AND THE FLIGHT TODAY WERE BOTH ENCOURAGING AND REASSURING. THOUGH THE AMOUNT OF DAMAGE IS STAGGERING AND THE EXTENT OF IT IS AWESOME, THE REHABILITATION EFFORT IS UNDERWAY.

3. FOR DEPARTMENT'S GENERAL INFORMATION BELIEVE FOLLOWING THREE OBSERVATIONS HIGHLY PERTINENT:

A) IT IS NOW OBVIOUS THAT THE POLITICIANS AND NEWSPAPERS WERE VYING WITH EACH OTHER TO EXAGGERATE DEATH TOLL. IN MY ESTIMATION THE DEATH TOLL WILL NOT GREATLY EXCEED 300,000, IF INDEED IT REACHES THAT NUMBER. WHILE BRUTAL IN ITS MAGNITUDE IT IS NONE THE LESS FAR SHORT OF A MILLION AND A HALF AS HAD BEEN PREDICTED BY ONE PROMINENT NEWSPAPER.

B) ALL OF MY AVAILABLE SOURCES, A NUMBER OF WHOM HAVE TRANSITED VARIOUS SECTIONS OF THE DEVASTATED AREAS AND CONVERSED WITH THE INHABITANTS, HAVE CONCLUDED THAT FEW IF ANY OF THE CASUALTIES DIED AS A RESULT OF SLOWNESS OF GOP EXPEDITIOUSLY TO MOVE RELIEF SUPPLIES TO THE DISASTER VICTIMS. VIRTUALLY ALL OF THE DEAD WERE KILLED BY CYCLONE AND TIDAL WAVE AND NOT FROM STARVATION OR EXPOSURE. HAVE NOT RECEIVED ONE REPORT TO THE CONTRARY.

C) THE PAKISTAN DISASTER RELIEF OPERATION IS NOW DEFINITELY MOVING INTO THE EARLY STAGES OF REHABILITATION. CONGEN HAS BEGUN PRELIMINARY PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE PULLOUT OF OUR MILITARY CONTINGENT THOUGH NO DATE AS YET IS FIRM. ON THIS SUBJECT, CONGEN BLOOD HAS BEEN INFORMED BY DEPUTY BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER, DACCA, THAT ENTIRE BRITISH RELIEF TEAM EXPECTS TO DEPART EAST PAKISTAN BY DECEMBER 12. THESE LAST TWO ITEMS WILL BE COVERED IN SEPTELS. GP-3.

BLOOD

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

DECLASSIFIED
PA/HO, Department of State
E.O. 12958, as amended
June 9, 2005